THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) 97 projects were pending for environmental clearance as on 31st October, 99. An annexure indicating details is appended. [Appendix 188, Annexure No. 10]

(b) Yes, Sir. The WEB-SITE address is http://envfor.nic.in/

The Web-site provides following details:

* Environment
  * List of Pending Projects (every fortnight)
  * Clearance letter issued in previous three months
  * Projects closed during the fortnight
  * Expert Committee Meeting schedules and composition of Expert Committees

* Forest
  * Projects pending with the Central Government/State Government (every fortnight)
  * Decided (approved/rejected/closed) projects
  * Procedure for applying for forest clearance (including application form and guidelines)
  * Advisory Committee Meeting schedules and composition of Advisory Committee

(c) The Government has constituted a Study Group, which inter alia includes a representative of the Reserve Bank of India for providing direction and impetus to the funding of projects for protection and improvement of the environment. It will consider ways and means for financing environmentally sound technologies, pollution control systems, afforestation and wasteland development.

Timber Smuggling along Assam-Nagaland Border

440. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether timber smuggling from the dense forests along the Assam-Nagaland border has been growing;

(b) whether trees on the national highways in the Region have also been cut down, resulting in large-scale soil erosion; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken to arrest these activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The State of Forest Report 1997 reports a decline of 237 sq. km. of forest cover in Assam and 70 sq. km. of forest cover in Nagaland as compared to 1995 assessment. Recently, based on the information received by Central Government 50 wagons allegedly containing illegal timber mixed with legal timber have been seized in Assam.

(c) Basic responsibility of taking action under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 lies with the state governments. Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Nagaland Forest Protection and Development Authority has been constituted. Regular review and monitoring of implementation of Hon'ble Supreme Court's Order issued in writ petition No. 202/95 regarding illegal felling of trees, transit of timber, shifting of wood based industries to industrial estates etc, has been ensured. Issue of felling permits to individuals and industrialists has been suspended as per Supreme Court orders.

Unqualified Lab. Technicians in Safdarjung Hospital

441. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's atttention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, one hall of a hospital, appearing in the HT City dated 15th October, 1999;

(b) if so, the facts brought but therein;

(c) the Government's reaction thereto;

(d) whether the court has warned the Safdarjung Hospital about violations committed in enrolment of lab. technicians who are 9th standard drop-outs, etc.; and

s(e) if so, the number of lab. technicians who are not fully qualified and the action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NT. SHANMUGAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b)The news item refers to an advertisement of 1986 inserted by Safdarjung Hospital and highlights, inter-alia that the In-service training course in Medical Lab. Technology falls far short of the academic requirements set out for Lab. technicians; 9th standard drop out are becoming Lab. Technicians; and that trolley pushers and sweepers are becoming Lab-Technicians.

(c) The in-service training in Laboratory of one year duration is a course approved by Director General of Health Services. The in-service candidate having minimum qualification S.S.C. with science or Matriculation without science with Laboratory experience are eligible. For external candidates advertisement is given in the News Papers. No external candidate having qualification of matric with Science having less than 60% of marks is given admission. The selection of the candidate for admission to the course is done by a constituted Committee.